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## THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

DDI #7143-82  
15 September 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, Weapons and Space Systems Intelligence Committee  
Chairman, Scientific and Technical Intelligence Committee

VIA : Deputy Director for Intelligence *S*

FROM :   
Acting Chairman, National Intelligence Council

SUBJECT : Proposal for an Interagency Study on Soviet Battlefield  
Laser Threat to US Forces

REFERENCE : Memo from D/OSWR to C/IIC, Same Subject, DDI-6870/82,  
Dated 23 Aug 82

1. I have reviewed the referenced proposal and believe it outlines an excellent approach to a key intelligence issue. It is clear that the deployment of anti-sensor laser weapons on the battlefield presents a major challenge to US weapon developers. The US Army Chief of Staff has recently reiterated his concerns over these developments. I believe these concerns and the other factors noted in the proposal argue for a prompt response by the Intelligence Community.

2. The most effective and efficient vehicle for such an assessment appears to be a joint WSSIC/STIC study. The assessment should include some projective thinking on where in the force structure these weapons may be deployed and how they would be used on the battlefield. This will require some work outside of the S&T Community. The study should be geared to the people who allocate R&D dollars rather than bench engineers and should be on as tight a schedule as possible.

3.  National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces, is prepared to cooperate fully in this project. He has spoken with General Meyer about Army concerns in this area and has recently begun a dialogue with the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Research, Development and Acquisition and his staff on more specific Army requirements. I believe Ted can offer valuable insights as your committees begin defining terms of reference for the study.

cc: DDCI

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23 AUG 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, National Intelligence Council

THROUGH: Deputy Director for Intelligence

FROM: Director of Scientific and Weapons Research

SUBJECT: Proposal for an Interagency Intelligence Memorandum on Soviet Battlefield Laser Threat to US Forces.

1. From a variety of sources, it is clear that there is heightened interest and concern over Soviet threats to US forces that are posed by lasers, particularly low and medium-energy devices that have received little or no serious attention in the Intelligence Community. Though recognition of the possibility of such threats is not at all new, having been discussed for well over a decade, there is now an appreciation of the enormity of the potential threat and the perception of a clear and present danger to US forces. ☐

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2. The most authoritative and up-to-date assessment of the problem and a statement of official concern are contained in the March 1982 Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Forward Area Laser Weapons. The covering memorandum for this report, approved by the Secretary of Defense, made specific recommendations for actions by the DOD, USDRE, and the Services. It also noted certain deficiencies in intelligence support, declaring that:

- "much more emphasis and higher priority should be given by the intelligence community to evaluating the laser threat, both from collection and analysis viewpoints. In particular, more emphasis is needed in the low and medium energy threat evaluation."
- the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, is to be required by USDRE to "provide greater effort and higher priority for intelligence collection and analysis on the Soviet anti-sensor laser threat, including not only high, but low and medium energy programs as well." ☐

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SUBJECT: Proposal for an Interagency Intelligence Memorandum on  
Soviet Battlefield Laser Threat to US Forces

3. In addition to any intramural efforts that individual intelligence agencies can and must undertake, perhaps serious consideration ought to be given to a prompt and direct response by the Intelligence Community. ☐

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4. I suggest that the NIC request an assessment of this issue jointly prepared by WSSIC and STIC. These committees have established subcommittees with some knowledge and responsibility in this area, and would be in the best position to respond in a timely manner. Furthermore, they are already working on a project in this area, as mentioned previously, so this effort would be a logical extension. The alternative would be to commission an IIM, but we believe that the state of knowledge at this time would not support as definitive a product as desired from an IIM. The WSSIC/STIC assessment would then serve as the first step, identifying areas for research prior to writing an IIM. (A rough outline and a terms of reference for such a study are attached for your consideration). ☐

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5. The WSSIC/STIC assessment as proposed would not be unique or without precedent, and it would not be premature. Recall that in the early 1970s the NIO/SP requested an encyclopedic assessment of Soviet capabilities to develop strategic (high-energy) laser systems. Last year, the STIC produced the community's seminal assessment of Soviet radiofrequency weapons capabilities. ☐

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6. Though preparation of the assessment on battlefield lasers would be time consuming and difficult, I nevertheless suggest that such an effort would be worthwhile and that serious consideration be given to undertaking it as soon as possible. I have discussed the possibility of undertaking this project with the Chairmen of WSSIC and STIC. ☐

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